

Message Text

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ACTION IO-13

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9372

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TAGS: PLAB, ILO, GB

SUBJECT: GABONESE PARTICIPATION IN 63RD INTERNATIONAL LABOR
CONFERENCE (ILO)

REF: A. STATE 102699

B. STATE 103404

C. STATE 104945

D. STATE 105258

E. LIBREVILLE 0704 (NOTAL)

SUMMARY: GOG LABOR MINISTER, WHO WILL HEAD GABONESE ILO DELEGATION,
EXPRESSED VIEW THAT GENEVA CONFERENCE SHOULD PRODUCE RESULTS
GENERALLY FAVORABLE TO CONTINUED US PARTICIPATION IN ILO.
END SUMMARY.

1. AMBASSADOR AND DCM CALLED ON MINISTER DELEGATE RESPONSIBLE FOR
LABOR AND SOCIAL SECURITY, HERVE AKENDENGUE, MAY 23 TO DISCUSS
UPCOMING GENEVA CONFERENCE AND TO GIVE HIM AIDE MEMOIRE PREPARED
FROM DEPARTMENTS FRENCH TRANSLATION OF ILO TALKING POINTS(
REFTEL D). DCM HAD PREVIOUSLY HELD SIMILAR DISCUSSIONS WITH FONMIN
OFFICIALS RESPONSIBLE FOR INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AND WESTERN
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HEMISPHERE AFFAIRS DURING WEEK MAY 9 AND HAD ALSO GIVEN THEM COPIES
OF SAME AIDE-MEMOIRE. FOREIGN MINISTRY, HOWEVER, ADVISED EMBASSY
TO TAKE UP MATTER PERSONALLY WITH AKENDENGUE SINCE HE WAS BOTH
RESIDENT ILO EXPERT (AKENDENGUE WAS WITH ORGANIZATION FROM 1964
TO 1976) AND DESIGNATED HEAD OF GOG DELEGATION TO GENEVA.

2. AKENDENGUE THOROUGHLY FAMILIAR WITH US POSITION VIS-A-VIS

ILO (REFTEL E), SO AMBASSADOR OPENED MEETING WITH BRIEF REITERATION OF IMPORTANCE US ATTACHES TO OUTCOME OF GENEVA CONFERENCE. LABOR MINISTER REPLIED TO AMBASSADORS CONCERN WITH OPTIMISTIC ANALYSIS OF CLIMATE WITHIN ILO FOR CONTINUED US MEMBERSHIP. HE STATE EMPATHICALLY THAT GABON AND ALL AFRICAN STATES FAVOR CONTINUED US PARTICIPATION IN ORGANIZATION. RECENT POLITICAL EVENTS, AKENDENGUE SAID, SUCH AS SUPPORT FOR US INITIATIVES IN SOUTHERN AFRICA WERE INDICATION OF CURRENT TREND TO SEEK NEGOTIATED SOLUTIONS RATHER THAN HARD LINE CONFRONTATION, WHICH WAS FAVORABLE SIGN FOR US.

4. AMBASSADOR NEXT RAISED QUESTION OF AFRICAN LABOR MINISTERS VOTE IN TRIPOLI REJECTING ILO GOVERNING BODY DECISION TO CLOSE BOOK ON 1974 ANTI-ISRAELI RESOLUTION. AKENDENGUE TOOK POSITION THAT VOTE WAS NOT IN ITSELF INDICATION OF ANTI ISRAELI SENTIMENT BUT WAS BASED INSTEAD ON CONSTITUTIONAL GROUNDS THAT ILO GOVERNING BODY WAS NOT EMPOWERED TO OVERTURN DECISION TAKEN BY PLEANARY SESSION OR ORGANIZATION. THEREFORE, DECISION TO CLOSE BOOK ON 1974 RESOLUTION COULD ONLY BE TAKEN BY VOTE AT ANNUAL CONFERENCE.

5. AKENDENGUE THEN SKIMMED THROUGH OUR AIDE-MEMOIRE AND OFFERED FOLLOWING COMMENTS:

A. AFRICAN LABOR MINISTERS AT TRIPOLI WERE UNANIMOUS THAT ORGANIZATION NEEDS STRUCTURAL REFORM TO REFLECT ITS EXPANDED, AND LARGELY THIRD WORLD MEMBERSHIP. HOWEVER, TRIPOLI VOTE CRITICIZING ILO GOVERNING BODY ON THIS ISSUE (AS ON 1974 ISRAEL RESOLUTION) WAS BASED ON PROCEDURE RATHER THAN SUBSTANCE. AFRICAN MINISTERS ARGUE THAT GOVERNING BODY IS OBLIGED TO FOLLOW CONFERENCE DECISIONS AND CANNOT ON OWN INITIATIVE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PPROPOSE CONVENING OF WORKING PARTY ON STRUCTURE.

B. AMENDMENT TO ARTICLE 17 WOULD NOT BE CONTENTIOUS ISSUE AT GENEVA AND SHOULD BE HANDLED IN CONFORMITY WITH US PROPOSAL.

C. MORRIS VERY LIKELY TO BE ELECTED CHAIRMAN OF GOVERNING BODY.

6. AT CLOSE OF SESSION, AKENDENGUE MENTIONED THAT HE HOPED BE ABLE TO DISCUSS THESE ISSUES FURTHER WITH US DELEGATE HOROWITZ IN GENEVA. HE THEN ENDED INTERVIEW WITH REITERATION OF OPTIMISTIC VIEW THAT WORLD POLITICAL CLIMATE NOW FAVORING ACCOMMODATION WHICH SHOULD HELP PRODUCE RESULTS IN GENEVA THAT WILL ALLOW US TO REMAIN IN ILO.

7. COMMENT: AKENDENGUE, AS HIGHLY KNOWLEDGEABLE ILO EXPERT AND AS REPRESENTATIVE OF GOVERNMENT WHICH WILL UNDOUBTEDLY SEEK POSITION IN MIDDLE OF AFRICAN SPECTRUM, SHOULD BE USEFUL CONTACT FOR US DELEGATION IN GENEVA. AKENDENGUE IS FLUENT IN ENGLISH AS WELL AS FRENCH. STEIGMAN

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